

---

Home Phone (541) 440-6548  
Email [frank\\_magallanes@hotmail.com](mailto:frank_magallanes@hotmail.com)

## Dear Honorable Chairman and Senators:

My name is Frank Magallanes and I am the founder of the Oregon Piranha Exotic Fish Exhibit (OPEFE) web site. I have kept and studied piranhas for over 40 years. I have also appeared in National Geographic Explorer teaching about piranhas and have been cited in Tropical Fish Hobbyist Magazine, Projecto Piaba (Manaus, South America) and other non-scientific literature and hobbyists forums in the internet. The OPEFE web site was created to educate people who keep piranhas as pets and to be used by researchers looking for scientific information pertaining to predatory fishes. Due to health reasons and given such short notice to attend these hearings I have asked a fellow hobbyist to read this letter to you. The purpose of this letter to argue against Senate Bill 125 for the following reasons:

## History

It has been 12 years since I first entered the District Court in Douglas County to contest the confiscation of my pet piranhas. Of the 3 confiscated fishes, 2 were returned because they were not true Piranha or members of the genus *Pygocentrus*. It has been 10 years since I first appeared and testified before the House Natural Resources Committee to revise ORS 498.242 under HB 2611 to allow possession of genera *Pygocentrus*, *Serrasalmus*, and *Pristobrycon*. There is no scientific merit to prohibit individual possession of piranhas or caribes. As was testified by me in 1995, the water temperature in Oregon rivers is too cold and will not allow this species or others to populate and breed in Oregon waters. This testimony was supported by later laboratory studies conducted by The American Fisheries Society in 1997. Their findings support that *Pygocentrus nattereri*, the common red-bellied piranha can not thrive or live in water temperature below 10 degrees Celcius (50 degrees Fahrenheit).

## Science and public fear

The general public has always feared piranhas dating back to former President Theodore Roosevelt and his adventure book entitled *Through The Brazilian Wilderness in 1914*. From that literature the public has learned to fear the piranha as a deadly fish that would attack, kill and eat anything in its path. Later, Hollywood movies would create larger than life images of mechanical piranhas mutilating unwary people who entered into lakes. This would further conjure up images supporting the reputation that piranhas are a deadly fish. Today's field researcher and scientists acknowledge the falsehood of that reputation. The common piranha or caribe is indeed a potentially dangerous fish if mishandled. They are also very aggressive when their nesting area is disturbed. However, their legendary ferocity is greatly blown out of reality. Dr's. William L. Fink (University of Michigan) and Antonio Machado-Allison (University of Venezuela) both well-published authorities on piranhas stated the obvious in the scientific abstract of Venezuelan piranhas: